

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method to enhance group communication within a network using
2 presence information, comprising:
3 maintaining presence information associated with a group of terminals;
4 maintaining presence information associated with each member of the
5 group of terminals; and
6 activating a group communication channel from a first member of the group
7 of terminals to available terminals within the group of terminals, wherein availability is
8 determined using presence information associated with the group of terminals and presence
9 information associated with each member of the group of terminals.

1 2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein presence information
2 associated with each member of the group of terminals is maintained within a server
3 coupled to the network.

1 3. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the availability is
2 determined by the server in response to programmable availability rules.

1 4. The method according to Claim 3, wherein the programmable
2 availability rules includes location information associated with each member of the group
3 of terminals.

1 5. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the presence information
2 is communicated to the first member of the group of terminals by the server.

1 6. The method according to Claim 5, wherein the availability is
2 determined by the first member in response to programmable availability rules.

1 7. The method according to Claim 6, wherein the programmable
2 availability rules includes location information associated with each member of the group
3 of terminals.

1 8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein activating the group
2 communication channel includes transmitting an instant message from the first member to
3 the available terminals.

1 9. The method according to Claim 1, wherein activating the group
2 communication channel includes synchronizing a calendar entry of the first member with
3 calendar entries of the available terminals.

1 10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein activating the group
2 communication channel includes synchronizing a task list of the first member with task
3 lists of the available terminals.

1 11. A presence enhanced group communication system, comprising:
2 terminals coupled through a network to form a group; and
3 presence servers coupled to the network and adapted to maintain presence
4 information associated with each of the terminals and adapted to maintain presence
5 information associated with the group, the terminals comprising:
6 a group presence module adapted to communicate with the presence
7 servers to maintain availability status of the group and each terminal within the group,
8 wherein a group communication channel is established in response to the availability
9 status.

1 12. The presence enhanced group communication system according to
2 Claim 11, further comprising location servers coupled to the network and adapted to
3 maintain location information associated with each terminal of the group.

1 13. The presence enhanced group communication system according to
2 Claim 12, wherein the terminals further comprise a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP)
3 module to facilitate communication with the presence servers and location servers.

1 14. The presence enhanced group communication system according to
2 Claim 13, wherein the group presence module is further adapted to determine the
3 availability status from the presence information and location information associated with
4 each terminal.

1 15. A mobile terminal wirelessly coupled to a network which includes a
2 group of mobile terminals wirelessly coupled to the network, the mobile terminal
3 comprising:
4 a memory capable of storing at least one of a group presence module and a
5 protocol module;
6 a processor coupled to the memory and configured by the group presence
7 module to formulate an availability status associated with each member of the group of
8 mobile terminals; and
9 a transceiver configured to facilitate content exchange with available
10 members of the group, the available members being selected in accordance with their
11 availability status.

1 16. The mobile terminal according to Claim 15, wherein the protocol
2 module includes a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) module.

1 17. The mobile terminal according to Claim 15, wherein the content
2 exchange includes an instant message exchange.

1 18. The mobile terminal according to Claim 15, wherein the content
2 exchange includes a calendar synchronization.

1 19. The mobile terminal according to Claim 15, wherein the content
2 exchange includes a task list synchronization.

1 20. A computer-readable medium having instructions stored thereon
2 which are executable by a mobile terminal for establishing a group communication channel
3 with a group of mobile terminals in a network by performing steps comprising:
4 accumulating presence information associated with the group and each
5 member of the group of mobile terminals;
6 determining availability of each member using the accumulated presence
7 information;
8 displaying the availability of each member; and
9 creating the group communication channel in response to programmable
10 rules of availability.

1 21. The computer-readable medium of Claim 20, performing steps
2 further comprising displaying a summary availability associated with the group of mobile
3 terminals.

1 22. The computer-readable medium of Claim 20, wherein creating the
2 group communication channel comprises:
3 determining the communication status requested by each member; and
4 transmitting information to each member in accordance with the requested
5 communication status.

1 23. The computer-readable medium of Claim 22, wherein transmitting
2 the information includes transmitting an instant message.

1 24. The computer-readable medium of Claim 22, wherein transmitting
2 the information includes synchronizing an electronic calendar of the mobile terminal with
3 an electronic calendar of each member.

1 25. The computer-readable medium of Claim 22, wherein transmitting
2 the information includes synchronizing an electronic task list of the mobile terminal with
3 an electronic task list of each member.

1 26. A server coupled to a network to facilitate presence based group
2 communication, the server comprising:
3 means for accumulating presence information relating to a group;
4 means for accumulating presence information relating to each member of
5 the group;
6 means for providing the group presence and member presence information
7 in response to requests received for the presence information; and
8 means for determining availability status of the group and each member of
9 the group in response to programmable rules of availability received from one of the
10 members of the group.

1 27. The server according to Claim 26, further comprising means for
2 accumulating location information relating to each member of the group.

1 28. A computer-readable medium having instructions stored thereon
2 which are executable by a server to facilitate group communication by performing steps
3 comprising:
4 accumulating presence information relating to a group;
5 accumulating presence information relating to each member of the group;
6 providing the group presence and member presence information in response
7 to requests received for the presence information; and
8 determining availability status of the group and each member of the group
9 in response to programmable rules of availability received from one of the members of the
10 group.

1 29. The computer-readable medium according to Claim 28, performing
2 steps further comprising accumulating location information relating to each member of the
3 group.

1 30. A method of managing presence information associated with a
2 group to establish a communication channel with the group, comprising:
3 activating an information field associated with the group;
4 monitoring presence information associated with the group;
5 determining an availability status of the group based on the presence
6 information; and
7 communicating the information field to the group in response to its
8 availability status.

1 31. The method according to Claim 30, wherein activating the
2 information field comprises activating an instant message portal to generate the
3 information field.

1 32. The method according to Claim 30, wherein activating the
2 information field comprises activating an entry within an electronic calendar.

1 33. The method according to Claim 30, wherein activating the
2 information field comprises activating an entry within an electronic task list.

1 34. The method according to Claim 30, wherein determining an
2 availability status comprises applying programmable availability rules in combination with
3 the presence information.

1 35. The method according to Claim 30, wherein communicating the
2 information field further comprises determining the communication status requested by
3 each member of the group.

1 36. The method according to Claim 35, wherein the communication
2 status comprises a communication preference to be used when communicating the
3 information field.

- 1 37. The method according to Claim 36, wherein the communication
2 preference comprises one of an email preference, a voice call preference, a Short Message
3 Service (SMS) preference, and an Instant Message (IM) preference.